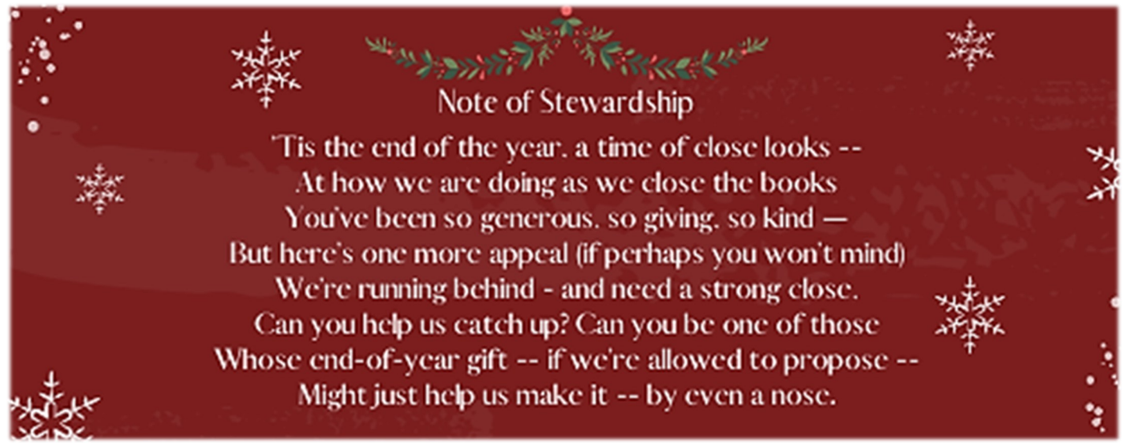
ELMHURST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
367 SPRING ROAD
ELMHURST, IL 60126



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ELMHURST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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DECEMBER 2021

Newsletter

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF ELMHURST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PASTOR'S + CORNER

REV. TRACI SMITH

This past Sunday, a little boy came to visit our church with his family and siblings. He was *a tiny* toddler, about three years old, and very small for a three year old. His face was one huge smile and his batteries seemed to be extra charged up as he zoomed around the narthex before worship. I was chatting with his parents, refugees from Honduras who have very little material possessions, but lots of hope. As I made them a cup of coffee and talked to them about everything they had left behind in Honduras and were hoping for in the US, the little boy's dad said "Honduras used to be a beautiful country but the gangs have made it so corrupt and awful." I said "It's still a beautiful country." This resonated deeply with him and I saw the hope and gladness in his eyes as we both took a deep breath.

Years ago, I lived in Honduras for about six months while I completed an internship in Social Work, one of my majors in college (Spanish was the other one.) When I was there I got to know Honduran culture, which is community minded, focused on enjoying the beauty of everyday pleasures and family life. We talked about my Honduran host family and my misadventures on the bus. I showed them that the pink packets in the sugar basket are not real sugar, not here or anywhere, such as McDonalds. When I mentioned McDonalds they told me a story of how they had been there recently but not known how to specify that the burgers they wanted were the $1 value burgers, so they were charged $12 when they only had $4. They said the manager got mad and they were scared. Suddenly, someone came up to the front and paid for the food. "Can you believe that someone gave us twelve dollars?" They said. "Twelve dollars! What a gift! We were so grateful. We didn't know the thing about the pink fake sugar though, so thanks for that."

I was still recovering from the story about the twelve dollars when that tiny toddler walked over to where we were standing. He pointed at the manger set on our counter, right at the baby Jesus and said "Es Dios?' (Is that God?) I felt a hard lump in my throat as I answered "Yes. It is. It's God as a baby." We never know who is going to walk through our doors and why. People usually come to a church because someone invited them. The Spirit is like the wind. You can feel it and see evidence of it, but you don't know where it's coming from and where it's going. Our job, as followers of Christ, is to do our very best to try and listen for the Spirit, understand Her (though She is often incomprehensible) and be ready when she shows up.

These pages contain many invitations for you to show up, be present in our community, serve God and practice a Holy Advent and Christmas.

Your job this Advent and Christmas season is to recognize those who recognize God.

Can't wait to see you at Christmas Eve Services!
Pastor Traci

UPCOMING» EVENTS

HAPPENING IN DECEMBER »»»

1-25 **FILL THE STABLE** Help us fill the stable with needed items for the community. Please see page 5 for more details.

19 **CHRISTMAS PAGEANT** A show where there's a part for everyone to play! Please see page 3 for more details.

24 **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE | 6 PM**
All ages worship. Please see page 6 for more details.

9 **EPIPHANY SERVICE | 10:30 AM**
All ages worship in January. Please see page 5 for more details.

POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS

From Paula Reckley - -

"Friends...it is, once again, time to order poinsettias to decorate our sanctuary on Christmas Eve.

Due to supply and demand, I need to call in our order on December 13th. Phillip's Florist is honoring our price from last season."

Logistics

You may pick up a form during church service on Dec. 5th. or 12th. and place it in the offering with your check.

You can also pick up forms in our church office and drop info/ checks in Paula's mailbox.

***Cost is $18 per poinsettia... specify red or white and jot down who you would like to dedicate your thoughtfulness to...**

To the memory of _____
In honor of _____
To the glory of God _____

Please see Paula Reckley with any questions about poinsettias.

POP–UP PANTRY

This year's Pop-Up Pantry was a great success!

Thank you to everyone who came out to help make a difference in the community.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Come join us for our Christmas Eve service this year starting at 6 PM.

Hear the Christmas story from people who actually lived it!

Mary

Bring your family and friends for a joyful night of singing, candlelight, and celebrating the birth of Jesus.

Joseph

Shepherds

...& more!

FAMILY MINISTRY

By Emily Culella

Family Christmas Pageant

Friends, we are so delighted to offer the magic of Christmas storytelling to everyone, this year! As believers, we come from a long tradition of putting on plays to tell the stories of our faith! In the medieval times, the plays were performed on the backs of carts, pulled through villages. The carts were called "Pageant Wagons" and they were a way for the (mostly illiterate) populace to see and hear the stories of God in their own language.

This year, on December 19th, we'll be hosting our own Pageant Wagon. Everyone who wants a part will get one (and maybe everyone who doesn't want one!) Bring your friends, neighbors, and any kids who you know!

The parts of Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus will be performed by puppets made especially for EPC by Luciana Bisesi! Come on down for the Greatest Story Ever Told, and a tradition that has endured through all of the years of our faith tradition.

DECEMBER Music

BY SUSAN SMENTEK

The 2nd Day of Christmas

CAROLING SERVICE

COME AND CELEBRATE WITH A MUSICAL VOCAL QUARTET WHO WILL SING ALL OF YOUR FAVORITES AND TAKE YOUR REQUESTS!

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT? BRING IT WITH YOU!

WE WILL HAVE AN OPEN MIC CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT SHARING TIME.

WE ARE EXCITED TO CONTINUE OUR CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS WITH YOU

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

UPCOMING EVENTS

Elmhurst Presbyterian Church is hosting another Fill the Stable event this December. Please help by donating essential items from the list. Drop off donations as indicated.

Start off the new year by joining us in our annual Epiphany Sunday worship service. Remember to get your star words as we ring in the new year.